

00:31:55 Debra McClelland: Debra McClelland, HNTE NIA

00:33:00 gcart: Erma Forbes Highland Acres

00:40:21 CAC Meeting 08022023: Please enter your name and organization in the chat for attendance records. Thank you.

00:49:16 ShaMecha King Simms: He's asking what was the way he communicated to neighbors.

00:49:23 ShaMecha King Simms: Wayne from Historic Holliday Park

00:52:28 ShaMecha King Simms: This is Steve from the Topeka Landlord Association

01:16:52 ShaMecha King Simms: The question is what a regulatory flood way?

01:33:47 ShaMecha King Simms: The question in the room is how soon will students be available...

01:33:55 ShaMecha King Simms: I see you Mike

01:34:04 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): How were those neighborhoods selected? How do we get on the list for our neighborhood?

01:34:37 ShaMecha King Simms: We opened it up at the July meeting Jaron...

01:34:56 ShaMecha King Simms: The neighborhoods were invited to let us know if they were interested or not...

01:35:13 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Got it. That WOULD be the one I missed

01:35:26 ShaMecha King Simms: I'm REALLY SORRY...BUT STAY TUNED!

01:37:40 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Reacted to "I'm REALLY SORRY...BUT..." with 🙌

01:37:48 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): I'm here for it!!

01:38:47 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Poverty exists in the context of a community!

01:43:00 ShaMecha King Simms: Definitely...the question in the room is should students come to the CAC meetings?

01:43:41 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Reacted to "Definitely...the quest..." with 🙌

01:50:49 7B: Alicia Jefferson Sq NIA hey everyone

01:51:58 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): aye

01:58:33 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): I have to drop in five

01:59:10 ShaMecha King Simms: Thanks Jaron. It's a vote from here.

01:59:23 ShaMecha King Simms: Reacted to "Alicia Jefferson Sq ..." with !!👍

01:59:45 ShaMecha King Simms: Reacted to "I have to drop in fi..." with 😊

02:00:31 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Please enter your name and organization in the chat for attendance records. Thank you.

Jaron Balderes Chesney Park. Apologies, I missed this

02:00:58 CAC Meeting 08022023: Thanks, Jaron!

02:02:11 Jaron Balderes (He/Him): Reacted to "Thanks, Jaron!" with 🍷

02:04:57 Debra McClelland: What does code compliance say about occupying a house without utilities?

02:13:18 ShaMecha King Simms: David Holl is speaking

02:14:25 ShaMecha King Simms: Jill Rice is speaking

02:19:55 Debra McClelland: yes

02:23:01 Sylvia Ortiz: Great job! It will be a great start.

02:23:26 ShaMecha King Simms: Reacted to "Great job! It will ..." with !!👍

Introduction to Community Studies

Fall 2023 | Tue and Thu | 2:30 – 3:45 PM | Dr. Miller

One course, four versions! Choose the section depending on what you need:

CE250 (CRN: 32252), HN202* (CRN: 30882), AN300 (CRN: 30961), and KS 399 (CN: 32246)

**HN202 Is a social science general education course!*

What is this course all about?

In this course, we will explore what it means to live in Topeka, work directly with local community-based organizations, and use a variety of tools including mapping, photography, video, and interviewing to help tell Topeka's story.



Questions? Contact Dr. Miller at jason.miller2@washburn.edu



Course Description:

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary academic discipline of community studies. Topics include the importance of understanding self and place, theories of community change, basic community-based research methods, and the importance of civic engagement.



WASHBURN
UNIVERSITY



CITY OF
TOPEKA

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

JULY 2023

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION SUPPORT FUNDS BUDGET REPORTS

Support funds are provided by the City of Topeka Division of Community Engagement through the Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Federal regulations permit the City of Topeka to enact policies in accordance with federal HUD guidelines. The following table includes items that are permissible and items that are restricted from federal funding use.

NIA Support	\$57,500.00
Contingency	\$ 5,000.00
Citizen Advisory Council	\$ 2,500.00
Total NIA Support Annual Budget	\$ 65,000.00

<https://www.topeka.org/citymanager/neighborhood-association-information/neighborhood-improvement-association-support-fund-budget-reports/>

CHANGING OUR CULTURE OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2023 Mowing Initiative

- [Tip Sheet](#)
- [Community Resource List – English](#)
- [Community Resource List – Spanish](#)

bit.ly/TopekaCOCPM
785-368-9530

TSC GET DIGITAL

The Topeka and Shawnee County Get Digital program provides affordable and equitable access to computer and internet equipment and services, along with technical support, training opportunities, and digital literacy services for low and moderate-income individuals and families. Through community collaboration and partnership, the program focuses on strategies and investments to create opportunities that help to reduce barriers to technology access and use with the overall goal of ensuring that all Topeka and Shawnee County residents and neighborhoods have the equipment and services needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to other essential health and human services.

> **1186 DISTRIBUTED COMPUTERS**
> **INTO THE COMMUNITY AS OF 7/31**
> **43 DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING**

NEWSLETTERS

Community Engagement is utilizing a new mailing address verification system that confirms both the accuracy and occupancy of each property captured on our NIA mailing lists.

We will make any necessary adjustments. Please note that the adjustments will be reflected on your budget reports at the end of February.

If you find any discrepancies please feel free to contact me and we will make the appropriate changes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCE BAGS

The Community Resource Bag is a printed version of local community resource information to give a quick view of helpful agencies you are mostly likely to need when helping yourself or someone else. We probably haven't captured everything, but our team is working hard to constantly improve the information by adding verified community programming on a weekly basis if you are interested in obtaining resource bags for your agency/organization please contact Monique Glaude at mglaudef@topeka.org or 785-368-4470.

> **2,994 BAGS DISTRIBUTED**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2023 National Night Out - August 5th

Cruisin' Back to School – A FREE community event.
Sun, Aug 6th 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Fairlawn Church of the Nazarene
730 SW Fairlawn Road

2024 DREAMS Application Deadline

Preliminary Applications – June 30 – September 1
Final Applications – September 2 – October 2

For more information, please contact Monique Glaude at mglaudef@topeka.org or 785-368-4470.



CE250 / AN300 / KS 300
Introduction to Community Studies

Dr. Jason Miller,
Associate Professor, Anthropology and Associate Director of the LinC Center for Community
and Civic Engagement, Washburn University

Email: jason.miller2@washburn.edu

APRIL

PROPS OFFICIAL

TENNESSEE TOWN
NIA



MAY

PROPS OFFICIAL

JEFFERSON SQUARE

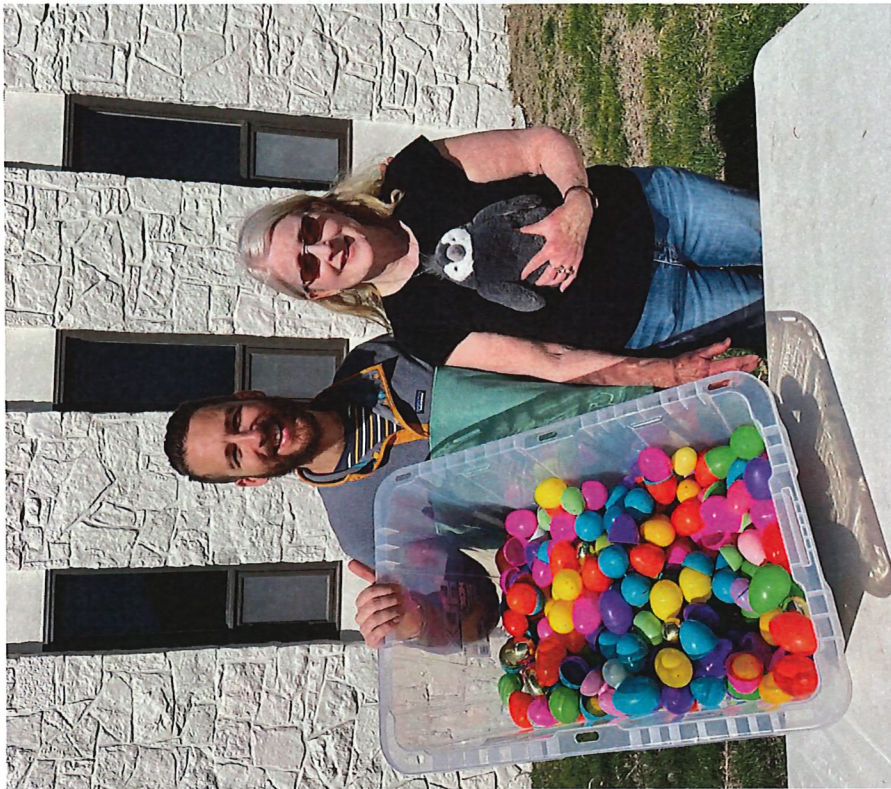
NIA



JUNE

PROPS OFFICIAL

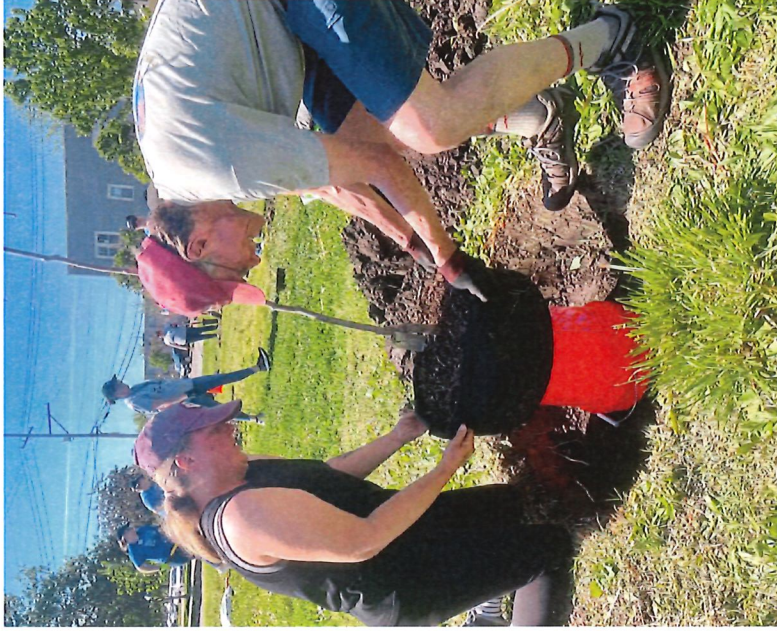
VALLEY PARK NIA



JULY

PROPS OFFICIAL

**HISTORIC HOLLIDAY
PARK NIA**



CAC Infrastructure Work Group

21st Century LMI Infrastructure Challenges and Opportunities

April 2, 2023

Following are the recommendations of the CAC Infrastructure Work Group, comprised of Jefferson Square CAC Representative Alicia Barber and CAC At-Large Member Michael Bell. These recommendations include a Sep. 22, 2022, Google Teams Meeting with Bell, Public Works Director Braxton Copley and Public Works staff members Nicole Malott, Heather Chilgren and Jessica Venvertloh.

Those recommendations are:

1. Utility rates need to be determined with the utmost respect accorded to low- to moderate-income Topeka residents, who often have to make choices about which obligations they can meet in a time of mostly stagnant wages and increasing prices. LMI people should not become unhoused because they can't pay for their utilities. Regarding utility rate discussions, Copley said during the Sep. 22, 2022 Teams meeting there had been no discussion of rates other than internal work updating the model we developed to see what the impacts of the extreme cost increases and inflation will be on the Utilities Department forecasted budget in future years. He also said that his department continues to look at opportunities to make changes to the Utility Rate Refund Program to provide assistance to a greater segment of the LMI community. Currently his recommendations are being reviewed by the city manager and staff.
2. Race and class, and how they impact low- to moderate-income people and neighborhoods, should be examined and acted on (<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/infrastructure-plan-21st-century-fs.pdf>). Nationally, the infrastructure failures in Jackson, MS and Flint, MI, immediately come to mind. In Topeka, the consequences of aged and aging infrastructure is a daily fact of life for most, if not all, of Topeka's NIAs. The 21 Topeka NIAs are where many, if not most, of our city's residents of color and LMI residents live.
3. Topeka's changes to its 50/50 sidewalk replacement program (<https://www.topeka.org/engineering/50-50-sidewalk-repair-program/>; where the city now bases the program on financial need as low- to moderate-income property owners can now have their portion of sidewalk replacement costs forgiven based on the area family income guidelines formulated by the federal government, similar to how those guidelines pertain to housing.
4. Copley said he plans on extending the new sidewalk guidelines to other infrastructure projects.
5. The original DREAMS program format, which came from the volunteer- and citizen-based Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group, of each NIA approaching Public Works/Public Utilities with its plans to address challenges and create opportunities should be pursued, not the competitive processes that the City of Topeka put into its interpretation of the DREAMS program. The original DREAMS program is what the CAC adopted.
6. Alleys should be a priority investment area in those NIAs that have them.
7. It's unknown right now what Topeka's share will be of the approximately \$34 billion in federal infrastructure funds that will pass through the state to us or what areas in which the funds can be spent. We need to know what that share will be and what those funds can be spent on, and the City of Topeka needs to commit to directing a large share of it to our city's NIAs.
8. We need to know the arrangements in place for spending the \$35 million in federal American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were earmarked for infrastructure activities to ensure that a large share of those funds go to our city's NIAs.
9. The pursuit and enforcement of the Complete Streets multi-modal transportation paradigm needs to occur WITH the complete involvement of the city's residents (from the drawing board through implementation and assessment), not having Complete Streets imposed on them with little resident input and participation like the 12th Street project. Here's a link to Complete Streets: https://s3.amazonaws.com/cot-wp-uploads/wp-content/uploads/planning/MTPO/TSC_CompleteStreets.pdf.
10. The part the digital divide plays in 21st-century infrastructure discussions (I informed Braxton that we had reached out to IBSA executive director Lazone Grays).
11. The commitment the City should have regarding LMI people and neighborhoods, exhibited by former Topeka Planning and Development Director Bill Fiander when he began working for the City in 1998: "what would you like to do and how can we help?"

12. Understanding that the City may not be able to help in ways we'd prefer but can look for alternative ways to achieve NIA goals ("there's more than one way to get to Kansas City").

Regarding the digital divide, its place as an infrastructure issue and its impacts on LMI people and neighborhoods, IBSA, Inc. Executive Director Lazone Grays, who has been a leading local voice on the topic, has offered the following plan currently being pursued in Pittsburgh, PA as a template for what could happen in Topeka:

"Organizations involved in the Pittsburgh Digital Equity Coalition will come together every few weeks to build a detailed playbook for closing the digital divide in Pittsburgh in 5 years. The playbook will:

1. Describe the history of the digital divide in Pittsburgh, including our unique challenges;
2. Map the great work that has already been done by our local organizations, big and small;
3. Outline actions that we must all take to ensure everyone has access to affordable internet service, user-relevant Computers, and the skills to safely and securely use the internet; and
4. Set the stage to apply for federal digital equity grant dollars to make the plan a reality.

<https://pittsburghpa.gov/press-releases/press-releases/5873>

"PDEC's strategy to close the digital divide will focus on achieving:

1. Reliable, robust broadband internet for all residents at a price point they can afford;
2. Access to a computing device that meets the needs of the end-users;
3. Digital skills to safely and securely use the internet for resident needs; and
4. Accessible technical support when technology breaks."

Discussion of Infrastructure Recommendations to Move Forward

1. In groups of no more than 4, share out which recommendations you individually selected as something to go forward as is or with more exploration. **(7 minutes)**
2. In your groups, tally and record which recommendations had the highest number of frequency. Assign a leader to read the recommendation numbers to the whole group. **(5 minutes)**
3. Weigh in as a group on what is needed to make the remaining recommendations stronger.
 - a. Determine if more labor and time is required to strengthen recommendations and who would be willing to complete the task.
4. If more labor is needed, a final vote will be deferred until the work is completed.
5. If no further labor on the recommendation is desired by the group, ask for a motion (and second) to call the vote of primary CAC members (or alternate if the primary is not present) to vote which recommendations go forward.

CAC Infrastructure Work Group
21st Century LMI Infrastructure Challenges and Opportunities

1. Utility rates need to be determined with the utmost respect accorded to low- to moderate-income Topeka residents, who often have to make choices about which obligations they can meet in a time of mostly stagnant wages and increasing prices. LMI people should not become unhoused because they can't pay for their utilities. Regarding utility rate discussions, Copley said during the Sep. 22, 2022 Teams meeting there had been no discussion of rates other than internal work updating the model we developed to see what the impacts of the extreme cost increases and inflation will be on the Utilities Department forecasted budget in future years. He also said that his department continues to look at opportunities to make changes to the Utility Rate Refund Program to provide assistance to a greater segment of the LMI community. Currently his recommendations are being reviewed by the city manager and staff.

Comments:

- Consideration of the usage should be looked at, in addition to rates, as there are more factors that weigh into bills (# of people in the household, plumbing issues, water line breaks, etc.) than just base cost alone.
- Look into subsidies over cutting rates to avoid reducing the City's ability to fund repairs and general maintenance.
- The CAC could consider supporting subsidies and other relief to LMI residents by recommending the final two sentences of the current recommendation, with language indicating that it was brought forth by the Public Works director.
- Probe deeper with questions to residents seeking utility relief about their water usage.
- Confirm with the City what data already exists on a given property's utility usage (when, how much, etc.).
- Help residents (and CAC) understand more about the Franchise Fee Credit Program and/or data that can be lifted from it by having Utilities report to CAC on it (ShaMecha's notes: The Franchise Fee Credit Program is very popular and was close to completely depleting funds according to comments from Utility Director Sylvia Davis at the meetings held at the end of December 2022).

2. Race and class, and how they impact low- to moderate-income people and neighborhoods, should be examined and acted on. Nationally, the infrastructure failures in Jackson, MS and Flint, MI, immediately come to mind. In Topeka, the consequences of aged and aging infrastructure is a daily fact of life for

most, if not all, of Topeka's NIAs. The 21 Topeka NIAs are where many, if not most, of our city's residents of color and LMI residents live.

Comments:

-This recommendation should fall in line with the US Census, County Health Rankings, and additional statistics that support the intersection of race, income, and outcomes in neighborhoods.

-Could this be rewritten from a Topeka-centered focus? Although we do understand these failings are happening nationally.

5. The original DREAMS program format, which came from the volunteer- and citizen-based Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group, of each NIA approaching Public Works/Public Utilities with its plans to address challenges and create opportunities should be pursued, not the competitive processes that the City of Topeka put into its interpretation of the DREAMS program. The original DREAMS program is what the CAC adopted.

Comments:

-K. Hiller: The DREAMS program got rid of SORT (what is now DREAMS 1) and recommended the Neighborhood Consults and all competitive grants, what is now DREAMS 2 and DREAMS 3.

-The DREAMS program presentation did not support continuation of SORT. CAC voted to support DREAMS as recommended which would allow neighborhoods to negotiate with the City and County directly for its needs, and not be obligated to a specified amount.

-January 6, 2021 is when CAC approved the DREAMS as presented at the December 2, 2020 meeting.

-The governing body never voted on the CAC recommendations (ShaMecha's notes: I could NOT find documentation via the City Council open records from 2021 that confirmed that the Governing Body DID vote on the CAC's recommendations).

-CoT departments may have decided internally how the DREAMS program would be implemented but no one is sure how this came about.

9. The pursuit and enforcement of the Complete Streets multi-modal transportation paradigm needs to occur WITH the complete involvement of the city's residents (from the drawing board through implementation and assessment), not having Complete Streets imposed on them with little resident input and participation like the 12th Street project.

Comments:

- Include more information about streets generally, not just Complete Streets.
- How to fix streets that may not have potholes but have need of maintenance.
- Citizens are not in agreement with how streets are maintained from the Public Works stance.
- More push with regard to how streets projects are completed, instead of postponing projects (ShaMecha's note: maybe this is about following and adhering to a publicized schedule?)

10. The part the digital divide plays in 21st-century infrastructure discussions (I informed Braxton that we had reached out to IBSA executive director Lazone Grays).

Comments:

- GetDigital Program (providing desktops and laptops) and Affordable Connectivity Program (providing access to wi-fi) are currently being used to address the digital divide in Topeka across all age-levels.
- Could we get a clearer statement of how or why we support closing the digital divide?
- What needs must be prioritized that we want the Governing Body to support closing/addressing?
- Mike Bell will talk to Lazone Grays to determine if we are on track with digital infrastructure.
- Cox will be phasing out the low-income wi-fi program available to families through school districts as early as September 1, 2023.

General Comments:

-Feedback from a CAC member: The infrastructure committee should “create a questionnaire to send out to the CAC members as well as to NIA officers about the report, and then the committee do their own analysis based on the feedback to report out to the CAC.”

-Combine #1 and #2 possibly as income plays a part in the ability to cover increases in utility rates.

-#1 and #2 might continue to be separate items as #1 deals specifically with utilities and cost; and #2 looks at race, income, and outcomes from a macro view.

CAC Chair Notes:

We decided to forgo the individual/small group/large group whittling process and used a committee-of-the-whole approach.

The June 2023 CAC meeting is when the infrastructure work group recommendations were first introduced to the CAC body. The original member, David Bawden of Oakland NIA, passed away unexpectedly in August 2022. This necessitated Michael Bell, At-Large Member stepping in to complete the project with Alicia Barber of Jefferson Square NIA.

Michael Bell self-selected the final 5 recommendations for us to flesh out and strengthen; the members present either agreed, or disagreed, to the edits.

RESEARCH LINKS

2022 Infrastructure Work Group Recommendations

July 2023 CAC Meeting

<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/boards-commissions/CAC/2023/CAC+Video07052023.mp4>

conversation begins at the 1:00 mark through 1:50 mark

Franchise Fee Program

<https://crcnet.org/franchise-fee-credit-program/>

Shawnee County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/kansas/shawnee?year=2023>

Shawnee County, Kansas Community Health Improvement Plan 2023-2025

<https://www.stormontvail.org/document/snco-chip-2023-25/>

you may need to download this plan in order to open it

2020 US Census Data

<https://data.census.gov/>

*you will need to specify in the search bar for data in Topeka, KS (Shawnee County)

National Resources Defense Council Fact Sheet

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/infrastructure-plan-21st-century-fs.pdf>

DREAMS Work Group Presentation: 12/2/2020

<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/boards-commissions/CAC/02020/CAC12022020+Video+File.mp4>

DREAMS Handout: 12/2/2020

<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/boards-commissions/CAC/Full+Set+DREAMS+Program+11192020.pdf>

DREAMS Adoption Motion: 1/6/2021

<https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/boards-commissions/CAC/02020/CAC01062021+Video+File.mp4>

Complete Streets:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/cot-wp-uploads/wp-content/uploads/planning/MTPO/TSC_CompleteStreets.pdf

TSC – Get Digital Program Page

<https://www.topeka.org/tscgetdigital/#gsc.tab=0>

Federal Communication Commission: Affordability Connectivity Program Page

<https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

Affordability Connectivity Program Application Page

<https://www.getinternet.gov/apply>

CoT Affordability Connectivity Program Announcement Page

<https://www.topeka.org/news/city-of-topeka-awarded-grant-to-spread-awareness-of-federal-affordable-broadband-program/#gsc.tab=0>

FEATURING



**SPENCER
DUNCAN**



**TOBIAS
SCHLINGENSIEPEN**



**TOPEKA WEST
DEBATE TEAM**

**Citizen
Advisory** PRESENT
Council

*Topeka Community
Policy Debate:*

**FEDERAL BASIC
INCOME**

Wednesday, August 16th, 5:30
Topeka & Shawnee County
Public Library

Join us for a low-stakes, interactive
opener to the 2023-2024 NFHS Policy
Debate Topic: Economic Inequality

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

[https://topekacommunitypolicy
debate.eventbrite.com](https://topekacommunitypolicydebate.eventbrite.com)

SORT/DREAMS Speakers, August 2, 2023, CAC Meeting

2017-2019 Tennessee Town NIA SORT Grant

Good evening,

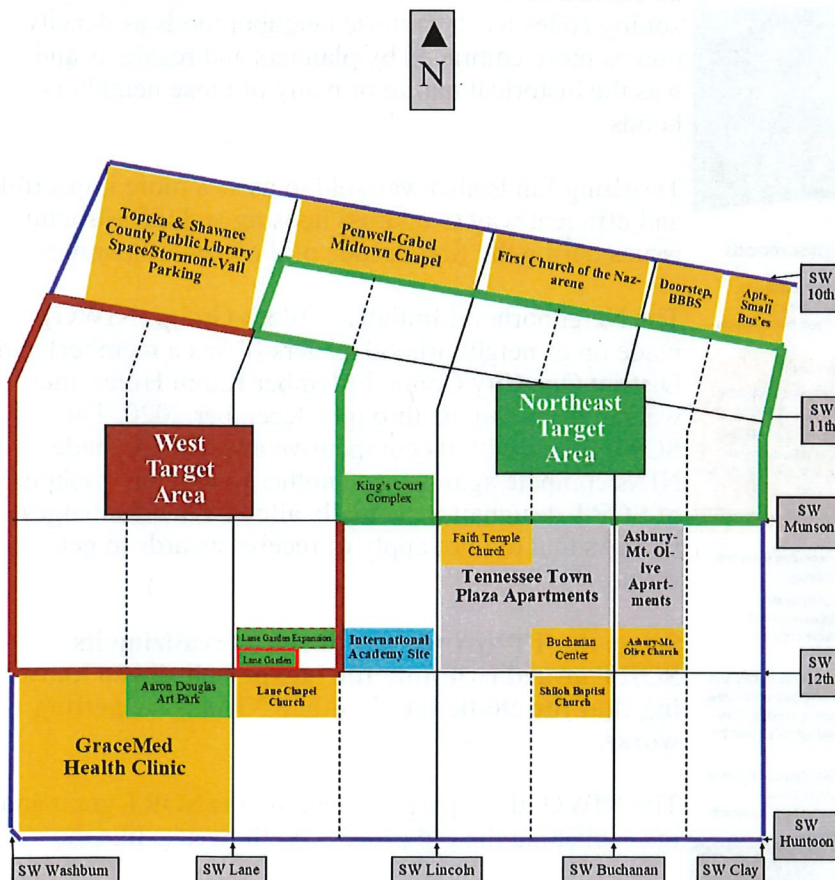
I'm Michael Bell. In addition to being a Citizen Advisory Council at-large member since 2021, I have been the Tennessee Town NIA president since 2014 and formally involved in the TTNIA since 1996. I was the NIA's point person on its first neighborhood plan, adopted in January 2001, and wrote multiple successful in-fill housing grants for the NIA prior to the formalization of the SORT. I wrote the NIA's successful application for the 2017-2019 SORT grant.

Our CAC chair, ShaMecha King Simms, asked me to speak on the TTNIA's experiences with being a recent SORT NIA. Tennessee Town was a SORT NIA for 2017-2019. It, along with the Quinton Heights-Steele NIA, were the last 2 NIAs recognized for simultaneous SORT grants. Since then it has been one NIA per year.

TTNIA's SORT grant was for \$330,000 in HOME funds for housing and \$1.4 million in City neighborhood infrastructure funds for street mill and overlay work and sidewalks/curbs/ADA improvements/gutters. The funds were spent in 2 target areas identified by the City's planning department as part of the TTNIA's 2017 neighborhood plan update (which was created as part of the SORT award as the first year of the award was for planning activities). Both areas were primarily on and north of SW Munson St.:

The Northeast Target Area: SW 10th on the north, SW Lane on the west, SW Munson on the south and SW Clay on the east.

The West Target Area: SW 11th on the north, SW Washburn on the west, SW 12th on the south and SW Lane on the east.



(https://s3.amazonaws.com/cot-wp-uploads/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/02/27185739/NHoodPlanTennesseeTown_web.pdf, pg. 52).

The area primarily on and north of SW Munson was identified in the 2017 TTNIA neighborhood plan update as declining.

In a deal negotiated with Housing and Neighborhood Development, the NIA, Stormont Vail and Cornerstone of Topeka, \$75,000 of the HOME funds were directed to in-fill housing through the construction of multiple duplexes in the first 1100 block of SW Lane on parcels owned by Stormont Vail and to leverage other funds for Cornerstone to build new housing in other NIAs. That happened, although the TTNIA was not invited to the groundbreaking or grand opening ceremonies for the duplexes

even though it provided the seed money for their construction and other Cornerstone projects.

The negotiated deal also featured Stormont-Vail donating multiple 25-foot lots it owned in the NIA to Topeka Habitat for Humanity for single-family housing development. That didn't happen as Habitat never accepted the property donations while constructing new housing in other neighborhoods.



My overall take on the TTNIA's 2017-2019 SORT grant is mixed. On the one hand, our neighborhood plan was updated after the first one had been adopted 16 years earlier, about 7 housing rehabs were completed, the duplexes on SW Lane were built, and the infrastructure improvements were made.

On the other hand, the TTNIA is one of the smallest geographical NIAs in Topeka (16 square blocks), yet we were only able to address housing and infrastructure issues in about half of it. Targeting the funds essentially from only 2 line items is part of what causes that problem. Inadequate contributions from the City coupled with the City not fully accessing all of the federal and other funds available for larger areas within NIAs is another part of the problem. (Note: We all have to work to make sure that the now-vested Affordable Housing Trust Fund, with \$1 million, is used to leverage other funds to make bigger impacts in more NIAs.)

The macro challenge here for me is that targeting funds has run its course in Topeka. Downzoning during the first decade of this millennium was sold to us as a positive to reduce the monster that was density; we now understand that the suburbanization of our center-city zoning codes has hurt those neighborhoods as density now is more embraced by planners and residents and was the historical nature of many of those neighborhoods.



Work Group Members

- Karen Hiller *
City Council Member, District 1
- Michael Bell §
Tennessee Town NIA president
- Ann Marshall
Chesney Park NIA president
- Michele Curtis McCaffrey
North Topeka West NIA member
- Susan McClacherty, 2021CAC chair §
Valley Park NIA vice president
- Teresa Miller
North Topeka West NIA president
- James Prout 2020 CAC chair §
Quinton Heights-Steele NIA president
- Mike Spadafore
Historic Old Town NIA treasurer
- Kimberly (Kim) Thompson
Central Park NIA vice president
- Eric Tyszko
Central Park NIA president

* City Council Member also serving on the Housing Study Implementation Committee

§ Citizen participants of the Housing Study Implementation Committee

Work Group Efforts

A New Approach for Topeka's Neighborhoods

The DREAMS Program is based on neighborhood input and assets, revitalization, activities, and successes. We present it here as an alternative approach to Topeka's current Neighborhood Revitalization program, proposed start 2021.

Neighborhood Goals: Attractive, Safe, Sense of Community

Neighborhood Association Goals: Increased Self-Sufficiency, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Interactions, Meaningful Improvements and Activities

DREAMS has Four Pillars at its foundation, each critical to developing and encouraging a strong, healthy community that is safe, desirable, successful, and accountable to the people for input and guidance on how they wish to see their neighborhoods develop over time:

Neighborhood Engagement Infrastructure Housing Community

- We believe that we should always start with celebrating what has been accomplished and learning from those successes.
- We think Community Engagement (CE) should shift to an engagement and access model that primarily focuses on NIA neighborhoods while still assisting other neighborhoods for prevention and sustaining activities.
- CE Staff duties would include assisting with approaches to City and County departments and other resources, Planning (see other side), grantwriting or access to help, assisting residents in building their own events, resulting in improved neighborhood identity, strength and quality and multiplier effect.
- We encourage events such as National Night Out, Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) training, and other opportunities to increase safety and security in our neighborhoods.

Targeting funds also was sold to us as a more impactful and efficient way to address housing and infrastructure issues during the first decade of the new millennium.

The Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group (NIWG), made up of neighborhood leaders (I was a member) and District One City Council Member Karen Hiller, met weekly from August through December 2020. The SORT grant, with its competitive awards that made NIAs compete against one another to win the "jackpot" of SORT designation, actually allowed the challenges in NIAs that did not apply or receive awards to get worse.

So, as the TTNIA worked through realizing its SORT award (winning the jackpot), it did so knowing that the challenges in other NIAs were getting worse.

The NIWG, then, proposed ending the SORT grant and reestablishing the old process (with tweaks like the

neighborhood consults to bring it into the 21st century) that enabled NIAs to directly negotiate with applicable City and County departments not just involving HOME and neighborhood infrastructure funds but involving their entire budgets to potentially affect larger areas of each NIA with the federal HOME funds providing a cherry on top of the new arrangement. DREAMS also proposed that each NIA have its neighborhood plan updated more regularly (the TTNIA had to wait 16 years), with 2 NIAs either creating or updating those plans each year in consultation with planning and development. This SORT replacement program would be called the DREAMS program.

Unfortunately, between the CAC approving the NIWG’s DREAMS program and the City actually implementing it, someone or some group within the City structure changed the DREAMS format back to what had existed with the SORT, namely competitive awards.

Moving forward, these things should happen regarding what is now known as DREAMS 1 (formerly the SORT):

- 1) All vestiges of the SORT program, including targeted funds/target areas and competitive grants, should once and for all be eliminated.
- 2) The original intent of DREAMS (now generally referred to as DREAMS 1), to enable NIAs to negotiate directly with government departments and their budgets, should be instituted.
- 3) NIA neighborhood plans should be created or updated much more often than they have been and on a regular basis (to be negotiated with planning and development) and the creation and updates of those neighborhood plans should happen regardless of whether an NIA is seeking any funding.
- 4) In the absence of a formal neighborhood plan, NIAs should work to establish their own “strategic plans” that result from multiple meetings to identify challenges and establish priorities so that, in the absence of a formal neighborhood plan, they still have something to identify themselves and to “sell” to those who can help to address their challenges.
- 5) Each NIA will need to insist, in writing if necessary, that any partners with whom it works honor negotiated agreements and show respect for its resident volunteers, who often take on what are essentially full-time jobs with no pay or benefits.
- 6) The NIAs should be recognized as the go-to groups regarding the challenges and opportunities within their boundaries and must be kept in the loop regarding revitalization activities.
- 7) The CAC should be recognized as the go-to association of those NIAs that seeks to address city-wide challenges and opportunities regarding low- to moderate-income people and families and LMI neighborhoods.

TENNESSEE TOWN

Topeka, Kansas



Neighborhood Plan

An Element of the
Topeka Comprehensive Plan
A Cooperative Effort By:

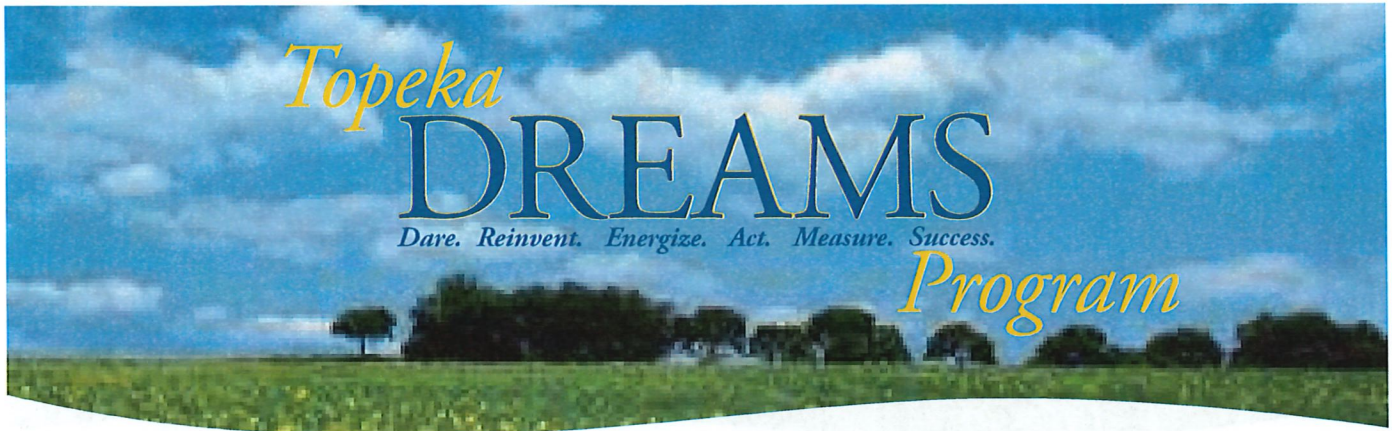
The Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association
&
Topeka Planning Department



ADOPTED:
Topeka Planning Commission, 10.16.17
Topeka Governing Body, 12.12.17

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bell
Tennessee Town NIA President
Citizen Advisory Council At-Large Member



Topic:

Restructuring Neighborhood Revitalization: Activity and Frequency

We hope that organizations grow in numbers and in partners, neighborhoods and their NIAs become stronger and directly active in programs and projects that affect them directly, more annual opportunities for meaningful improvements and activities are accessible to all neighborhoods.

Current opportunities:

Streets: every 15 years, then limited

Curb & Gutter: every 15 years, then limited

Sidewalks (small projects): every year

Sidewalks (large projects): every 15 years, then limited

Affordable Housing: every 15 year, few options

Park Projects (small): every year

Park Projects (large): Every 15 years

Special Projects (small): Every year

Special Projects (large): Every 15 years

Neighborhood Staff: focused on administration

Grant Possibilities: rare

Neighborhood Planning: tied to SORT, but only after award had already been made

TeamUp2CleanUp: Every 10 years, only in a package

Opportunities could be:

Every year, everywhere

Every year, everywhere

Every year

Every year, everywhere

Every year, more options

Every year

Every year

Every year

Every year

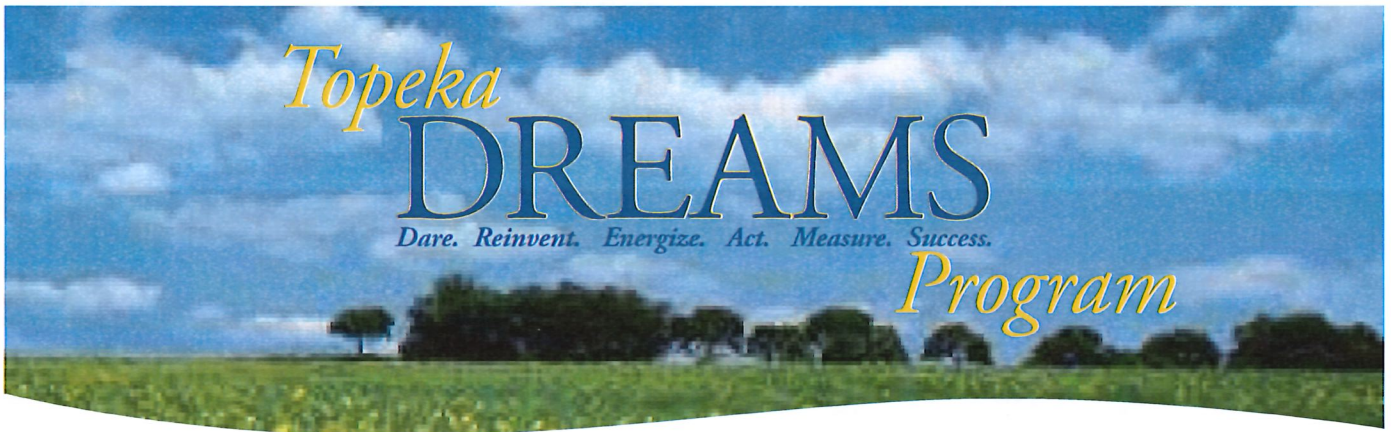
Focused on neighborhoods

Always

Independent rotation, updates always available

Every year, neighborhoods to choose 'pieces' or ask for package*

* Package might include: Fire hydrants, Storm inlet cleanouts, Brick street recovery, Street sign replacement, Sidewalk renovations, vegetation removal, Walk-and-Talks, Smoke Detectors, House numbers, CPR Instruction, Service fairs, Code sweeps, Police traffic checks, Abandoned vehicles, Vacant structures, Trash pickups, Volunteer house rehab, Infill site review.



Topic:

The Four Pillars and Multipliers

The DREAMS Program has four pillars at its foundation, each a critical component to developing and encouraging a healthy community that is safe, desirable, successful, and accountable to the people for input and guidance on how they wish to see their neighborhoods develop over time. These pillars are:

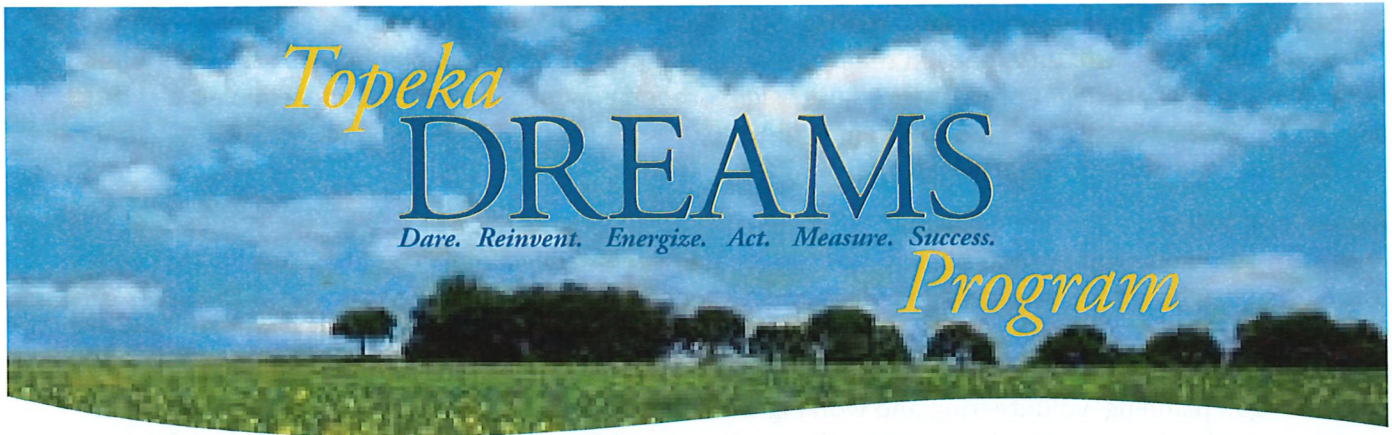
- **Neighborhood Engagement:** Community-building activities such as communication, meetings, events, neighbor-to-neighbor engagements for health, safety, cleanups, holidays such as Halloween and Christmas, youth-oriented activities, fundraisers, collaborations with other partners or neighborhoods... pretty much anything that engages neighborhoods in a productive way. Measures could be actual numbers of different residents and total numbers of engagements as well as neighbors reporting an increased sense of place belonging, and other measures appropriate to the specific plan. Multiplier effect measures can include such things as whether the engagement of one person was multiplied because that person then brought another person in, if neighbors follow one person's or a neighborhood's activity with one of their own, and so on.
- **Housing:** Any program for maintenance, repair, improvement, addition, replacement or infill of all or part of a property or premises. Measures can include whether completion made the property more attractive, more cost-effective, safer, increased its resale appeal and other. Multipliers could include whether when one person did something (no cost, private cost or with assistance), and the others followed (again, at no cost, private cost or with assistance) with additional related activities or actions.
- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure would include streets, street improvements, curb and gutter, alleys, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible crossings, bus stops, bikeways, utility lines, wi-fi networks, access points and other shared amenities. Measures would include what was done and its value. Multipliers could include whether Housing, Neighborhood Engagement or other events occurred subsequent to the Infrastructure improvement that appeared to be inspired by the Infrastructure improvement.
- **Community:** Can include health and wellness, education, neighborhood retail or commercial, parks and recreation, community gardens, major development features, activities, partnerships, workforce development, community policing and the like. Measures and Multipliers would be set and measured similar to those above.

Success Measures for DREAMS Program activities related to the Four Pillars:

Level 1 – accomplishing the action/event (level of completion)

Level 2 – related activities occur beyond the scope of the initial action/event (multiplier)

Level 3 – tie action/event to the DREAMS goals (advancement towards goals)



Topic:

How Will We Get There?

Neighborhood Goals: Attractive, Safe, Sense of Community

Neighborhood Association Goals: Increased Self-Sufficiency, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Interactions, Meaningful Improvements and Activities

DREAMS has **Four Pillars** at its foundation, each critical to developing and encouraging a strong, healthy community that is safe, desirable, successful, and accountable to the people for input and guidance on how they wish to see their neighborhoods develop over time:

Neighborhood Engagement Infrastructure Housing Community

Celebrating Accomplishments

Start with celebrating what has been accomplished so far in Topeka (and learning from it). Encourage neighborhoods to share successful past programs with each other. Hold a program-long celebration of existing projects and programs that have been done to date (a one-time celebration) to kick off the DREAMS initiative.

Community Engagement

Shift to an engagement and access model. Primary focus will still be NIAs, with other neighborhoods for prevention and sustaining activities. Staff duties would include being a liaison to City and County departments, Planning (see below), grantwriting or access to help, and directly helping residents build their own events, resulting in improved neighborhood identity, strength and quality and multiplier effect. Neighborhood-generated opportunities should be prioritized and neighbor-to-neighbor activities encouraged. Slight restructuring of the Neighborhood Operating Funds program could provide an incentive to preserve the funds by allowing Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC) to come up with a planned alternative use for unused \$\$.

Neighborhood Planning

Streamline the process. Freestanding cycle. NIA 10-year rotation (2 per year) for full updates. Updates upon request thereafter, per staffing availability. Link to Historic Preservation planning as needed.

Affordable Housing and Revitalization

Shift to flexibility and opportunity model. Engage all NIAs in planning for the Affordable Housing menu, with all options available to all neighborhoods every year. These options would include everything from Major Rehab, Exterior Rehab, Homeownership and Infill to Self-Help Rehab, Weatherization, Accessibility and Emergency Repairs. Neighborhood-generated opportunities prioritized and neighbor-to-neighbor activities encouraged. Work collaboratively to refresh Neighborhood Enhancement and Code Compliance Programs (that includes a variety of inspections) will be critical. Programs to be managed by City and/or contracted vendors.

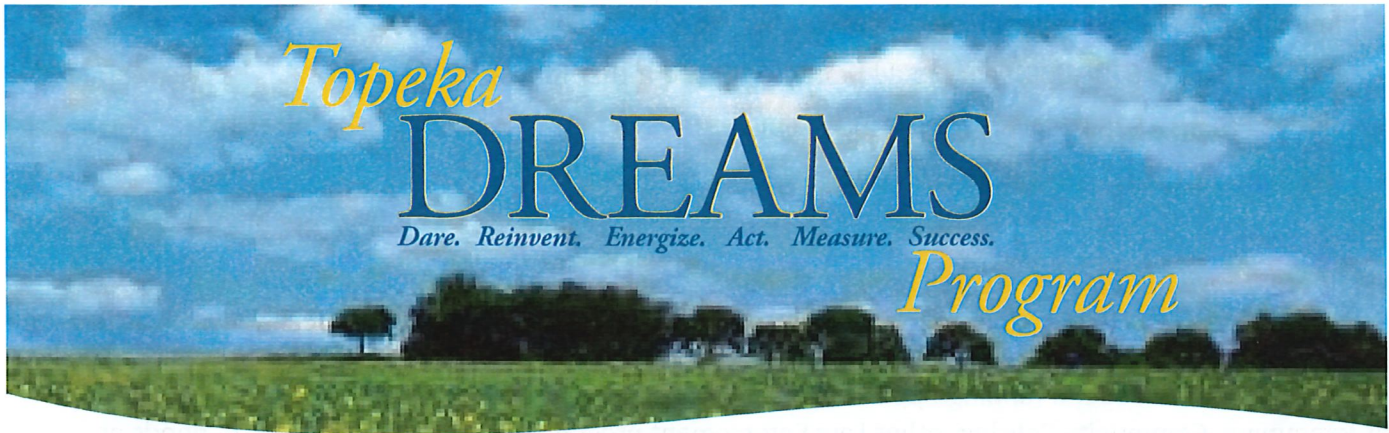
Shift from current Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) parameters to a program that provides access to all City and County infrastructure funds in their own departments, either through annual set-asides or direct bidding in the capital budget processes. Adjust neighborhood annual planning and application cycles as needed for timing. Create DREAMS Program with \$200,000 per year for grants of \$100 to \$200,000 that can be used for small projects, local match, etc.

Appeal and Safety

Refresh in-kind and neighborhood-based cleanup, beautification and safety programs. Support that with owner- and neighborhood-based Code Enforcement vegetation program. Encourage links with events such as National Night Out and training like the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) program. If a communitywide Anti-Blight/Beautification initiative is established, neighborhoods could participate by assisting in planning, volunteering and working with partners as well as referring residents in need of assistance to the program. Retain eligibility of dumpster rental fees for cleanup events using NIA funds.

Direct Action

Choose periodically to take direct action to influence needed changes in plans, policies, procedures and public laws through neighborhood and/or local and regional coalitions. Actions could include calls, written communication and testimony in public forums regarding issues including, but not limited to, code compliance; community policing; affordable housing implementation; Street, bikeways, sidewalks and utilities plans; HUD funds spending plans (Consolidated Plan and any other); TeamUp2CleanUp or similar programs; Neighborhood Planning processes and products; Zoning; Parks and Rec plans and budgets (County); vegetation and overgrowth policy and initiatives; race and culture, aging, youth, and disability initiatives.



Topic:

Neighborhood Objectives and Available Resources

Neighborhood Goals: Attractive, Safe, Sense of Community

Neighborhood Association Goals: Increased Self-Sufficiency, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Interactions, Meaningful Improvements and Activities

DREAMS has **Four Pillars** at its foundation, each critical to developing and encouraging a strong, healthy community that is safe, desirable, successful, and accountable to the people for input and guidance on how they wish to see their neighborhoods develop over time:

Neighborhood Engagement Infrastructure Housing Community

Each year each neighborhood is encouraged to come up with DREAMS – usually three, any category, ideally as SMART goals. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

We have a dream that _____

We have a dream that _____

We have a dream that _____

For example, “NIA X has a dream that we will complete five blocks of curb and gutter repair/replacement on Anyplace Street in our neighborhood before December, 2021.”

Community Engagement (CE) staff will assist as needed with identifying, framing and pursuing the DREAMS through strategies, city, neighborhood, volunteer, other types of resources and in how to establish timelines and engage neighbors. (Note: Not all will require \$\$.) CE Staff will also provide assistance with grantseeking and grantwriting, training opportunities, and seeking and arranging infill and redevelopment programs.

Neighborhood Planning staff, in conjunction with CE staff support, will make available all Neighborhood Plans, and periodic updates to the Plans to all neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods, with staff assistance as needed, will develop and pursue the goals.

City resources available to neighborhoods will include, but not be limited to:

- Affordable Housing funds – minimum \$1.3 million/year (Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investments Partnership Program (HOME))
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), has a \$700,000 per year goal

- Infrastructure funds – streamline process, minimum \$ 1.4 million/year (City CIP program)
- DREAMS Fund - \$200,000/year (could be CDBG, City, or other funds)
- Training funds - \$25,000/year (City General Fund)
- NIA Support funds - \$65,000/year (CDBG)

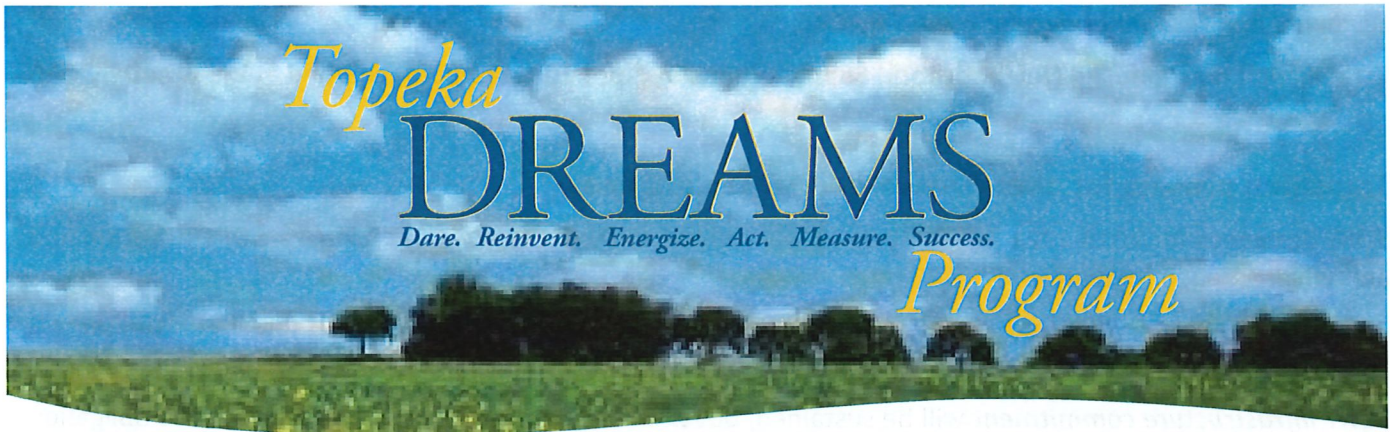
What other resources are we talking about? TeamUp2CleanUp components, Code Compliance, Topeka Opportunity to Own (TOTO), Nonprofit and Private Infill Housing, Grants the City has received such as Federal Home Land Bank (FHLB), Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, Bikeway and Trails, Other private and public competitive grants, Federal funding opportunities , Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO)-funded programming, Community Policing, other Law Enforcement programs, In-kind contributions of goods or services from local businesses, schools, and non-profit agencies, Cost-shared and Public/Private Partnership (PPP) programs, resources from the neighbors and neighborhood.

Success Measures for DREAMS activities:

Level 1 – accomplishing the action/event (level of completion)

Level 2 – related activities occur beyond the scope of the initial action/event (multiplier)

Level 3 – tie action/event to the DREAMS goals (advancement toward goals)



Topic:

Transitioning to the DREAMS Program from SORT

Community Engagement staff job descriptions change in December 2020. Start with a look-back, identifying and celebrating successful strategies and accomplishments January 2021.

DREAMS goal-setting begins for all NIAs in January 2021.

Health Maps will continue to be used to determine eligibility for neighborhoods to be designated as NIAs for HUD funding purposes. Otherwise, ***Planning and Community Engagement staff, in collaboration with CAC, will determine valid performance measures for Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Improvement Associations*** by April 2021. Staff will also ***develop a format for the NIAs to record their DREAMS goals and the three levels of measurement*** by April 2021 as well.

The Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) will continue to reflect all neighborhood-related activities and funding sources. ***Community Engagement staff will work with CAC to recommend to the Con Plan and thoroughly review and approve/comment before it is submitted to the City Council and HUD.***

Neighborhood Planning shifts to 10-year rotation for full updates (2 per year) and as-needed for specifics in 2021. 10-year calendar to be set by February 2021. CAC members, as reps of their NIAs, assist in setting rotation.

Affordable Housing programs become available to all NIAs starting January 2021. First come, first served. Pursue as part of DREAMS goals and/or as opportunities emerge. Anticipated amounts and programs to be available in the coming year should be known by October of each year via the Housing Department and the Con Plan.

Infrastructure funds will go on a bid schedule in 2021 – requests due to Public Works by August 2021, decisions made as part of City CIP in March/April 2022 for work starting in 2023 and out-years. Cycle will repeat annually. Report of already-scheduled Infrastructure projects for 2021, 2022 and after will be provided to NIAs.

DREAMS Fund will take applications in June 2021, using modified Empowerment Grant guidelines, for 2021 grants to be awarded in August 2021. Grant guidelines for 2021 and for 2022 and future will be developed by CAC in consultation with staff by April 2021. Applications for 2022 funds will be due August 1, 2021, simultaneous with Infrastructure applications.

CAC will be responsible to receive, process and make recommendations on these grants.

Code Compliance should be done by Property Maintenance.

TeamUp2CleanUp transitions into options for every neighborhood every year, starting 2021. Recommended that proposals are requested to arrive annually with DREAMS Fund proposals and ***both are collaboratively***

reviewed and recommended for award by CAC.

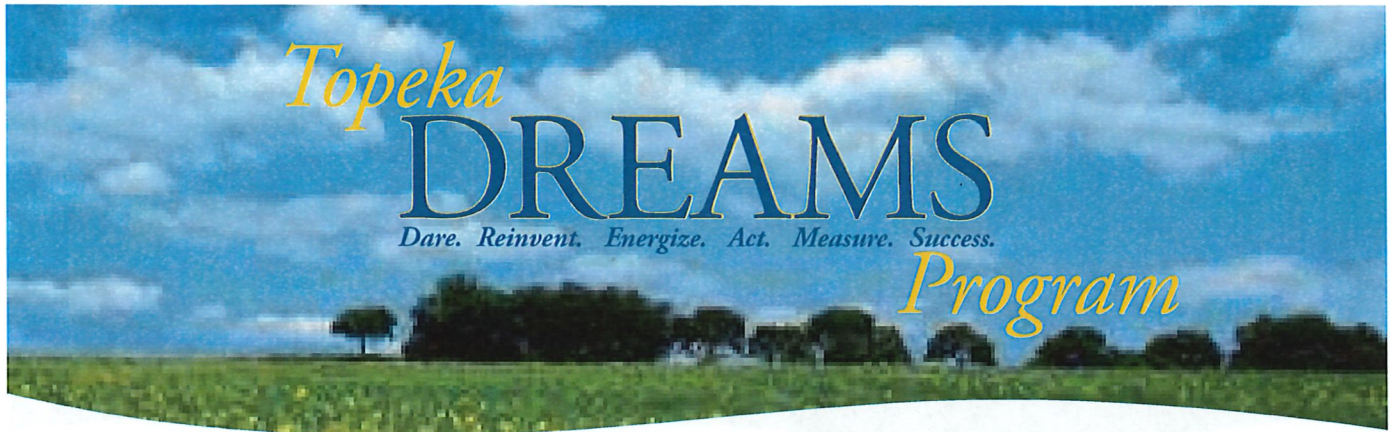
Establish plan for unused Neighborhood Support funds by April 2021. To be developed and advised by CAC.

Transition process for already-awarded SORT designees

SORT designees for 2019-2021 and 2020-2022 will *convert to DREAMS planning for their SORT program* and annual planning immediately.

Affordable Housing will be cut loose from SORT Program, but will still be available to that NIA on the same basis as others.

SORT infrastructure commitment will be sustained, but *will convert to an “up to” the amount*. No obligation to create projects just to spend the money. Option to shift immediately to staff assistance in looking for other sources if what the awarded NIA wants in their DREAMS plan is not an eligible SORT project.



Topic:

Community/Neighborhood Engagement Job Description (assume 2.0 FTE)

Duties:

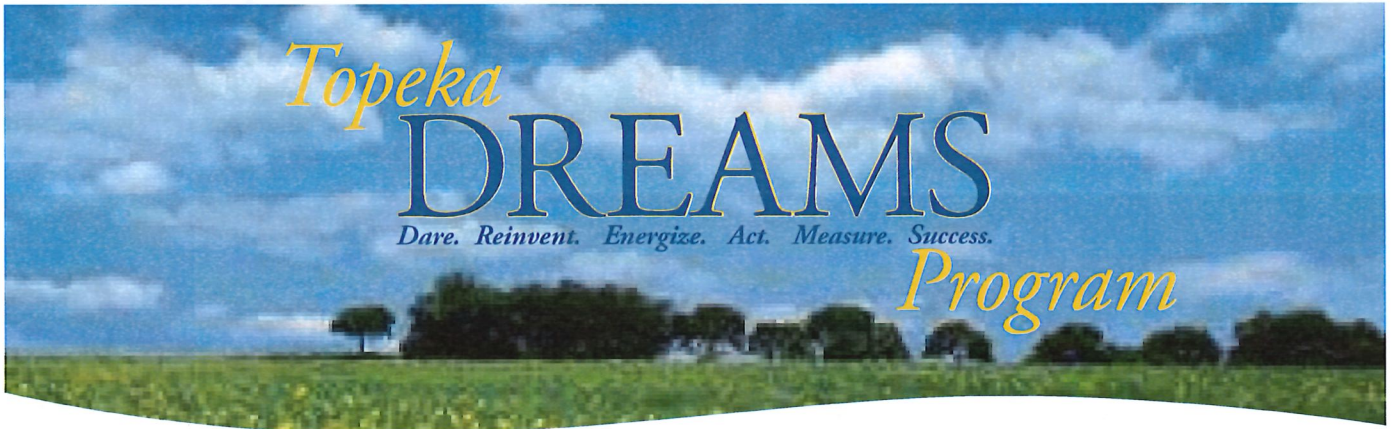
- Support NIAs in the formal neighborhood planning process (expected to be 2 per year, plus updates as needed), as well as in development of internal NIA programming, pursuit of project funds and fundraising.
- Guide NIAs in planning, revitalization, and encouragement efforts by connecting with any government department or service needed, citywide or targeted initiatives (e.g. beautification, cleanups), and expert resources.
- Assist with grantwriting.
- Support NIAs in membership, communication and activities. Seek and connect NIAs with appropriate training. Assist in connection with partnership programs in the private or other government sectors (e.g. youth, safety, food, recreation).

Qualifications:

- Knowledgeable about the following: all City services, processes and timelines; Community services; Housing and commercial redevelopment and innovations; Zoning; Real estate; Housing and infrastructure construction; Basics of lending and financing alternatives; Taxes and assessments; Planning; All existing plans affecting neighborhoods; Recreation; Volunteerism and resources; Historic preservation; Current trends and events.
- Able to help people and groups help themselves (e.g. be resourceful, build teams, keep up with changes).
- Understand neighborhood and organizational dynamics.
- Understand and be able to work with the different life stage cohorts – broadly defined as youth at all stages, young adults (25-45), mid-life adults (45-65), seniors (65+).
- Able to work with each neighborhood independently with its unique character, issues and dynamics.

Team attributes:

At least one person from the team should have a strong background in and deep understanding of redevelopment, neighborhood and community empowerment, and grantwriting, each with demonstrated mastery and success. If any of the above qualifications are waived, a resource partnership that meets all criteria must be created for training, everyday connection and possible contracting.



Topic:

The DREAMS Fund

Grant Application Amounts: \$100-200,000

Purpose of Grants: To fund strategic investments in neighborhoods
Funds can be used for an entire program or as local match, including being pledged match for a major grant

Options: Any project/program that ties to the Four Pillars, with evident justification on why it is a strategic investment in Topeka. Success Measures are expected of each DREAMS project. NIA must show how project/program fits into overall goals for Neighborhoods and NIAs.

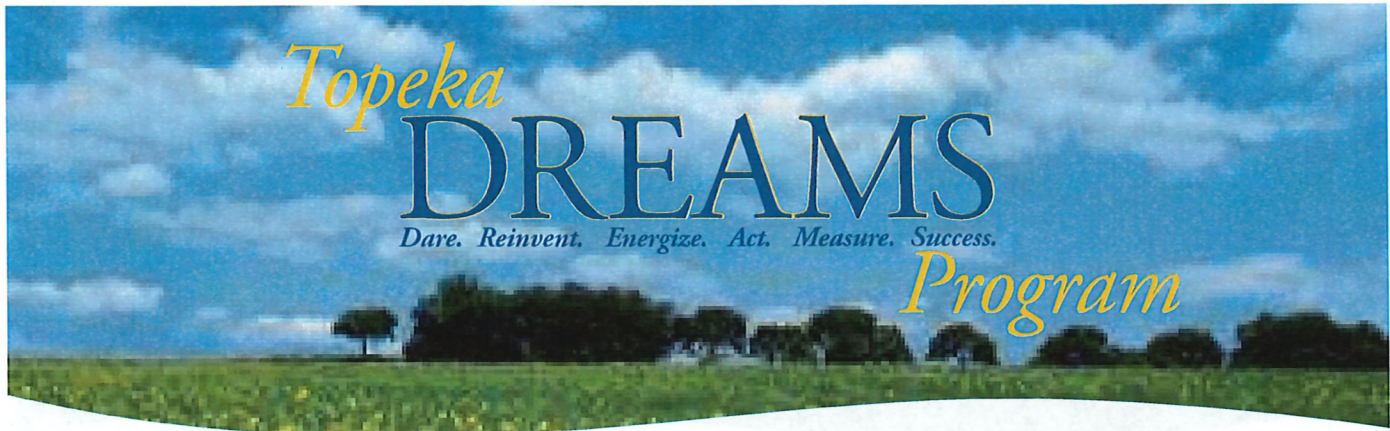
Scoring Criteria: *Yet to be developed*
Extra points could be awarded to neighborhoods who demonstrate
- At least 20 residents involved in the application
- Independent neighborhood initiatives that did not involve City funds or anything more than advice from City staff

Who will Advise and Award? The CAC will advise, including consultation with applicants as well as with City, regarding optimizing funds. Staff from Community Engagement as well as other appropriate departments will advise, and City Council will vote on awards.

Funding Sources:

2021 - \$200,000 (\$60,000 or more from CDBG, remainder from a source to be designated by the City Manager); 2022 and after – could be the same as 2021, 100% from Debt Service Fund, or some other combination or sources to be designated by the City Manager.

Projects that would qualify for DREAMS Fund dollars could be put into the full CIP or other City or partner program, thereby freeing up \$\$ in the DREAMS Fund for additional neighborhood investments.



Topic:

From the City's Side: Transition of Funding and Administration

Affordable Housing

CDBG, HOME, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and other federal and major grant (such as FHLB) funds will be spelled out in the Con Plan and administered as they always have been. Programs like TOTO, Infill Housing, Homebuyer Counseling, Tenant-Landlord Counseling will continue in the Con Plan and be administered as before. Housing staff will also be working with affordable housing providers on funding and programming from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and otherwise. As those sources are known in advance, they will be included in the Con Plan as before, and managed as before.

Infrastructure

SORT, as a \$1.4 million line item, will begin to disappear as early as 2021 when East Topeka North and Valley Park's plans become known. Wherever their DREAMS programming can be accommodated by an existing line item in the CIP, it will be earmarked for that NIA, but will be funded out of its CIP "bucket." Community Engagement, Planning and Public Works staff will assist the NIAs in their planning and options; Public Works staff will administer all projects, including all financial and project recording and reporting. In August 2021, applications of interest will come from the NIAs' DREAMS plans instead. Some applications will be affirmations of interest in projects that are already calendared in the CIP, some will be requests for new projects, to be calendared somewhere in the CIP, if funds and priorities allow.

Requests for the DREAMS Fund will come in at the same time. Those requests that are of a scope that they are CIP eligible should be considered for CIP inclusion as well, based on dollars already available or for consideration of inclusion. There is an expectation that at least \$1.4 million of the CIP each year will be dedicated to projects within the NIA boundaries.

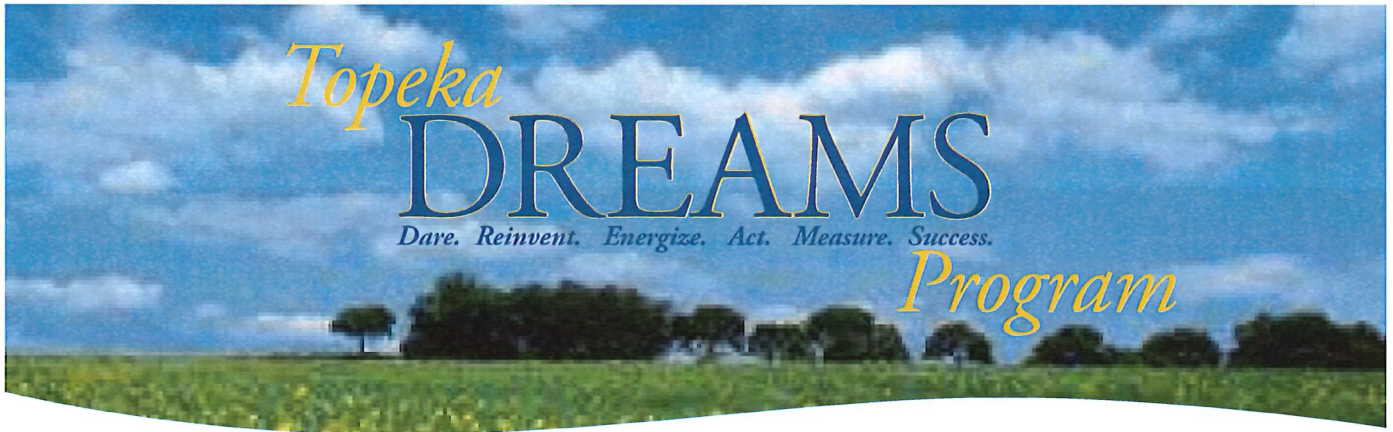
We recommend a shift in infrastructure funding from the SORT Program to all City and County funds in their own departments. Funds will be accessed through annual direct bidding in the capital budget processes and community engagement in planning processes.

DREAMS Fund

2021 - \$200,000 (\$60,000 or more from CDBG, remainder from a source to be designated by the City Manager); 2022 and after – could be the same as 2021, 100% from Debt Service Fund, or some other combination or sources to be designated by the City Manager.

TeamUp2CleanUp Program

2021 will transition from being targeted as a package solely to selected intensive care blocks in two neighborhoods per year to allowing components or full packages to be open to requests. CAC would assist in developing guidelines. Requests would likely be due in August as part of the menu with other City program and funding requests.



Topic:

Potential Citizens Advisory Council Enhancements

[Below are ideas related to the CAC in general that surfaced throughout the four months the Neighborhood Initiatives Work Group met to discuss the Affordable Housing and Consolidated Plan. They are presented here only as a record of thoughts and ideas from the Work Group's discussions, not as decisions made. The CAC may choose to discuss - or not - any or all of these ideas as they deem appropriate.]

The CAC could be more member-driven, with direct and regular support from Community Engagement staff, and be recognized and assisted as needed by other City staff. The roles of the CAC **could include:**

- Engaging and inspiring neighborhood preservation and improvement.
- Officially advising all HUD-related neighborhood programming.
- Otherwise advising, per preference, all other City plans (CIP, Bikeways, Pedestrian, Land-Use, Policing, Code Compliance and others such as Zoning, Transportation, and more), County plans (Parks and Rec, Trails, Criminal Justice and other) and such other public/private plans as Affordable Housing.
- Advising goals and funding for the DREAMS Fund.
- Serving as a conduit for neighborhood-to-neighborhood communication, collaboration and celebration.
- Generating joint initiatives.

Perhaps the CAC could meet all 12 months? December could be a good time to report and celebrate successes over the year, and the extra meetings would give more time to review and comment on documents that directly affect the NIAs.

Possible Meeting Content:

- Major or minor education features regarding neighborhood engagement and revitalization – could be a video or speaker from outside (or inside) the city, or an NIA showcasing a program
- Stories and celebration of individual and joint initiatives
- Review of a relevant plan or initiative - as-is and/or to discuss recommendation or opportunities
- Problem-solving and mutual support on individual and joint initiatives

Valley Park

Neighborhood



Helpful Tools and Talents



- Walk-n-talks
 - Meet neighbors
 - Establish/expand neighborhood email distribution list an
 - Gather input about needs within the neighborhood (prior to the SORT application process)
 - Share upcoming neighborhood events or resource information (as added-value during transformation phase)
- Identify and track owner-occupied properties, rentals, and vacant properties
- Obtain education on linkages impacting housing conditions, e.g., missing lifecycle of vacant houses with a ridged deadline for selling/rehabilitation, demolition, rebuild; waterflow; housing programs to assist with improving housing of existing/occupied houses located in floodplains
- Monitor progress of projects



Anticipated Outcomes from SORT Application

SORT Application Housing Summary

- The housing projects include encouraging home ownership, reducing vacant and condemned properties, and encouraging landlords to use best practices such as screening and filling vacancies.
- The housing projects would impact Neighborhood Quality of Life and Neighborhood Housing.

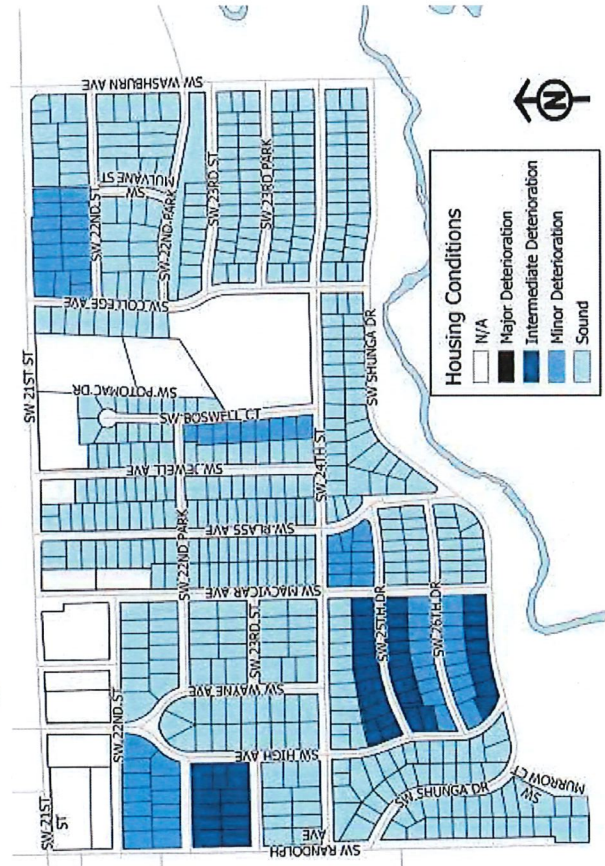
Benefits of Housing

- Provides families the opportunity to accumulate “wealth” and create long-term savings (largest lifetime investment)
- Strengthens communities
- Fosters civic pride
- Provides children with a stable living environment

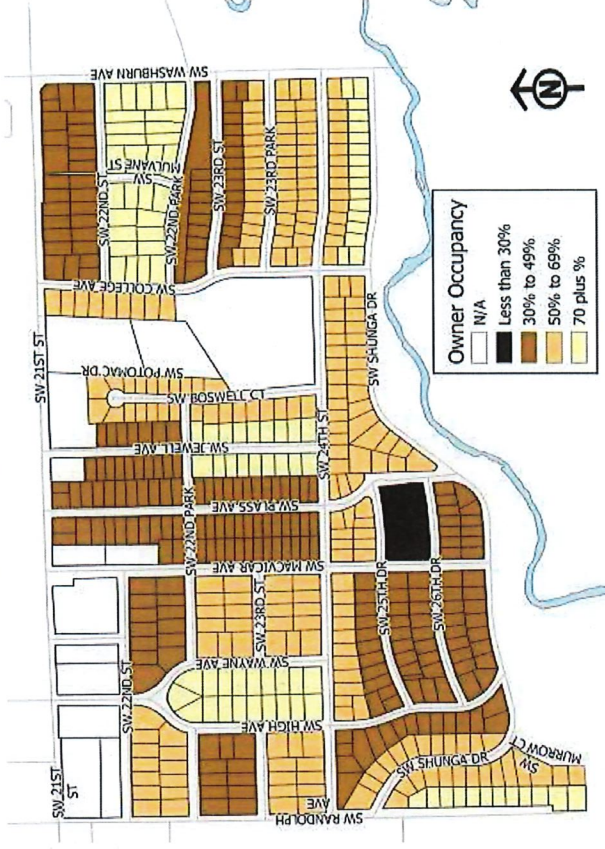
The Planning Phase



Housing Conditions



Owner Occupancy





The Planning Phase

Target Areas Selected



Target Area 1 (West)

Pros:

- Two blocks with housing needs
- Builds off of a strength and anchor

- Low infrastructure score

Cons:

- Not in a high visibility area.

Target Area 2 (Central)

Pros:

- Highest Area of need
- Abuts 21st Street (high visibility)

- Next to Community Church

- Relatively low owner occupancy, infrastructure, and higher rate of crime

Cons:

- No strength housing blocks
- Housing conditions Sound

Target Area 3 (East)

Pros:

- Builds off of two strength blocks
- Good mix of owner-occupied and rental

- Washburn and 21st Street (high visibility)

Cons:

- Higher housing scores
- Infrastructure along 21st and Washburn is good.



Planning Principles for Housing Projects

- Placing housing investments into a 3-5 block area will give that area a much better chance to transform and become another strength.
- The more areas of strength and fewer areas of weakness in a neighborhood, the better it will be.
- Targeted areas have a greater chance to succeed if it can:
 - Attach itself to an anchor and/or area of strength (protect assets)
 - Address a significant need or weakness (transform)
 - Provide a benefit to the greatest number of people possible
 - Leverage private investment to the greatest extent possible (sustainable)



Planning Phase Milestones

- November 4, 2020 – Citizens Advisory Council selected the Valley Park Neighborhood as the 2021 Stages for Resource Targeting (SORT) Neighborhood
- March 25, 2021 – SORT Kick-off Meeting
- April 27, 2021 – Valley Park SORT Planning Committee Meeting
- May 27, 2021 – Valley Park Plan Review Committee Meeting
- July 22, 2021 – Valley Park Plan Review Committee Meeting
- September 20, 2021 – Public Hearing to amend text and map of the City of Topeka’s Comprehensive Plan creating the Valley Park Neighborhood Plan; Approved 7/0/0
- November 9, 2021 – City Council approved neighborhood plan
- June 29, 2023 – NIA decided to forgo an infill housing project being considered outside the boundaries of the three targeted areas; \$208,000 remains in the Valley Park SORT Housing Budget

Communication Efforts for Housing Projects

- April 2022
 - First letter sent out
 - Walk-n-Talk (6 staff)
 - Staff dropped off applications
 - Second letter sent out
- May 2022 – postcard sent out
- June 2022
 - Second Walk-n-Talk (9 staff)
 - Staff dropped off applications
- July 2022
 - First letter to 2nd & 3rd areas
 - Sent application to a landlord
- August 2022 – Second letter sent out to 2nd & 3rd areas
- September 2022
 - Third letter mailed to all target areas
 - Third Walk-n-Talk (2 staff)
 - Staff dropped off 5 SORT applications and 1 accessibility application
- October 2022
 - Fourth Walk-n-Talk (2 staff)
 - Staff dropped over several SORT applications, 1 emergency application, and 1 accessibility application

Communication Efforts for Housing Projects

(continued)

- March 2023
 - Housing Services Staff attended NIA Meeting
- July 2023
 - Postcard mailed to all SORT areas by NIA



Transformation Phase and Preliminary Housing Project Outputs

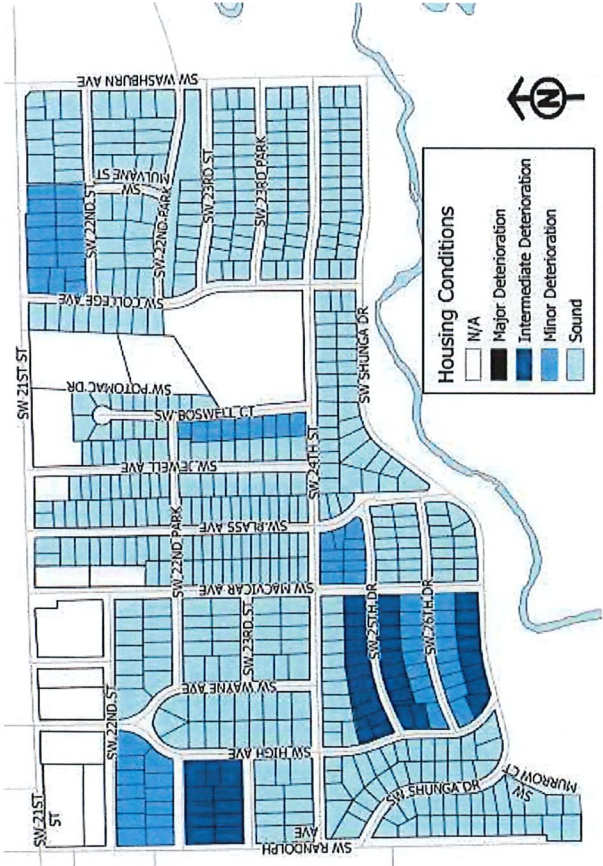
38 – SORT Applications Sent Out

- 20 – Applications Received by City’s Housing Services Division
 - 11 Applications Denied (Over Income Limit)
 - 2 Applications Denied (Over Fair Market Rate Rents)
 - 1 Application Withdrawn/Cancelled by Landlord
 - 2 Incomplete Applications (Letter sent to homeowners requesting missing information and each called prior to 6-month period lapsing from receipt of application)
- 4 Qualified Applications
 - **3 – major rehabs completed** (2 in primary area, 1 in secondary area)
 - **1 – minor rehab completed** (target area unknown/not provided)



Outcomes of Housing Projects in Valley Park

Pre-SORT Housing Condition



Post-SORT Housing Condition

- Is there a change in the block's overall housing condition where rehabs were completed?



